

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37

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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Robert Field et al.

Examiner: Kien T. Nguyen

Serial No.: 10/714,566

Group Art Unit: 3711

Filed: November 14, 2003

Docket: 1721.004US1

For: INFLATABLE SLIDE OR BOUNCER

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 CFR § 41.37

Mail Stop Appeal Brief- Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The Appeal Brief is presented in support of the Notice of Appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, filed on September 12, 2006, from the Final Rejection of claims 1-23 of the above-identified application, as set forth in the Final Office Action mailed on April 20, 2006.

The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 19-0743 in the amount of \$250.00 which represents the requisite fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2). The Appellants respectfully request consideration and reversal of the Examiner's rejections of pending claims.

1. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest of the above-captioned patent application is the assignee,
CUTTING EDGE CREATIONS, INC.

2. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other appeals or interferences known to Appellant that will have a bearing on the Board's decision in the present appeal.

3. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

The present application was filed on November 14, 2003, with claims 1-23. A non-final Office Action was mailed August 11, 2004. A Final Office Action was mailed January 26, 2005. A Request for Continued Examination and Amendment and Response to Final Office Action were filed July 26, 2005. Another non-final Office Action was mailed August 10, 2005. A Final Office Action was mailed April 12, 2006. Claims 1-23 stand rejected in a Final Office Action, remain pending, and are the subject of the present Appeal.

4. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments have been made subsequent to the Final Office Action dated April 12, 2006.

5. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Some aspects of the present inventive subject matter include, but are not limited to, apparatus and methods of using an inflatable device.

As recited in claim 1, an apparatus (100) includes a first inflatable section (210) having an interior (215) open to an airflow from a continually running blower (105) which provides support for the first inflatable section, the apparatus of a type such that the apparatus is safely usable as long as the blower is continually running, a second inflatable section (230) attached to a first side of the first inflatable section and having an interior that is substantially separated from the interior of the first inflatable section, and a third inflatable section (250) attached to a second side of the first inflatable section and having an interior that is substantially separated from the interior of the first inflatable section. (Figures 1-2, page 3, lines 8-18). The second inflatable section (230) and the third inflatable section (250) are configured such that if the airflow into the first inflatable section (210) from the blower is stopped the second inflatable section and the third inflatable section will not deflate as fast as the first inflatable section, wherein the second inflatable section and the third inflatable section provide support to the first inflatable section when the airflow into the first inflatable section from the blower is stopped. (Figures 3-4, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 6, an apparatus (100) includes a second inflatable section (230) of an inflatable amusement or advertising unit supporting a first inflatable section (210), the first inflatable section including a slide (120) having a height of at least 15 feet, (Figures 1 -2, page 2, line 21 and page 3, lines 8-18), wherein the second inflatable section is adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of airflow to the inflatable unit is interrupted or stopped such that the slide is supported by the second inflatable section. (Figures 3-4, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 11, an apparatus includes an inflatable structure (100) having a height of at least 15 feet and adapted to be supported by airflow of a continually running blower (105) such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running, (Figure 1, page 2, lines 19-24), and means to at least temporarily support the inflatable structure at substantially

its full height if the airflow from the blower into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure. The structure supporting this means plus function limitation includes, for example, the inflatable structure having a first inflatable section (210) and a second inflatable section (230) separated by a wall (240) that causes the second inflatable section (230) to deflate more slowly than a first inflatable section (210) when a source of airflow to the inflatable unit is interrupted or stopped. (Figure 2, lines 15-16 and Figures 3-4, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 14, an apparatus includes an inflatable structure (100) having a first inflatable portion (210) defining a slide (120) having a height of at least 15 feet and a stairway (110) extending to the top of the slide, (Figure 1, lines 19-20), the first inflatable portion having an interior volume (215) open to an air-flow from a blower (105) and adapted to be pressurized by the blower running continually such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running, (Figures 1-2, page 3, lines 8-18), the inflatable structure including a second inflatable portion (230) attached to the first inflatable portion and having a bottom surface (305) resting on a ground surface and a top section (315) attached to the first inflatable portion at a height at least half-way up the first inflatable portion, (Figures 2-3), page 4, lines 20-28), the second inflatable portion not having direct communication with the airflow such that the second inflatable portion inflates slower than the first inflatable portion and also deflates slower than the first inflatable portion, wherein if the airflow from the blower is stopped or reduced the second inflatable portion will at least temporarily support the first inflatable portion. (Figures 3-4, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 17, an apparatus includes an inflatable amusement or advertising structure (100) adapted for inflation by a substantially continuous airflow from a blower (105) such that the inflatable structure is safely usable only as long as the blower is running, (Fig 1, page 2, lines 13-25), the structure including at least two inflatable sections wherein a first one of the inflatable sections (230) is positioned and adapted to: a) remain inflated longer than the other inflatable section (210) after airflow from the blower is interrupted, and b) provide support for the other inflatable section (210) so as to support the other inflatable section up to substantially its full height even as the other inflatable section deflates. (Figures 3-4, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 20, a method includes supporting a first inflatable section (210) of an inflatable amusement or advertising structure (100) up to substantially its full height using a second inflatable section (230) adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of continual airflow (105) to the inflatable structure is interrupted or stopped. (Figures 1-4, page 2, lines 13-25, page 4, lines 10-19).

As recited in claim 22, a method includes inflating and supporting an inflatable slide structure (100) to a height of at least 15 feet with an airflow from a continually running blower (105), and at least temporarily supporting the inflatable slide structure at substantially a full height of the slide structure if the airflow into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure. (Figures 1-4, page 2, lines 13-25, page 4, lines 10-19).

This summary does not provide an exhaustive or exclusive view of the present subject matter, and Appellant refers to the appended claims and its legal equivalents for a complete statement of the invention.

6. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Whether claims 1-23 were properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gordon (U.S. Patent No. 6,558,264) in view of Blair et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,462,505).

7. ARGUMENT

A) The Applicable Law under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has the burden under 35 U.S.C. § 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). To do that the Examiner must show that some objective teaching in the prior art or some knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art would lead an individual to combine the relevant teaching of the references. *Id.*

The court in *Fine* stated that:

Obviousness is tested by “what the combined teaching of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art.” *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 425, 208 USPQ 871, 878 (CCPA 1981)). But it “cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching or suggestion supporting the combination.” *ACS Hosp. Sys.*, 732 F.2d at 1577, 221 USPQ at 933. And “teachings of references can be combined *only* if there is some suggestion or incentive to do so.”

Id. (emphasis in original).

The M.P.E.P. adopts this line of reasoning, stating that

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on Appellant’s disclosure.

M.P.E.P. § 2142 (citing *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)).

The test for obviousness under § 103 must take into consideration the invention as a whole; that is, one must consider the particular problem solved by the combination of elements that define the invention. *Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil*, 774 F.2d 1132, 1143, 227 USPQ 543, 551 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Furthermore, claims must be interpreted in light of the specification,

claim language, other claims and prosecution history. *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co.*, 810 F.2d 1561, 1568, 1 USPQ2d 1593, 1597 (Fed. Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 481 U.S. 1052 (1987). At the same time, a prior patent cited as a § 103 reference must be considered in its entirety, “i.e. as a whole, including portions that lead away from the invention.” *Id.* That is, the Examiner must, as one of the inquiries pertinent to any obviousness inquiry under 35 U.S.C. § 103, recognize and consider not only the similarities but also the critical differences between the claimed invention and the prior art. *In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831, 834, 15 USPQ2d 1566, 1568 (Fed. Cir. 1990), *reh'g denied*, 1990 U.S. App. LEXIS 19971 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Finally, the Examiner must avoid hindsight. *Id.*

A factor cutting against a finding of motivation to combine or modify the prior art is when the prior art teaches away from the claimed combination. A reference may be said to teach away when a person of ordinary skill, upon reading the reference, would be discouraged from following the path set out in the reference, or would be led in a direction divergent from the path the applicant took. *In re Gurley*, 27 F.3d 551, 31 USPQ 2d 1130, 1131 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *United States v. Adams*, 383 U.S. 39, 52, 148 USPQ 479, 484 (1966); *In re Spinnoble*, 405 F.2d 578, 587, 160 USPQ 237, 244 (C.C.P.A. 1969); *In re Caldwell*, 319 F.2d 254, 256, 138 USPQ 243, 245 (C.C.P.A. 1963). Moreover, if a proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification. *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984); MPEP § 2143.01. However, the level of skill is not that of the person who is an innovator but rather that of the person who follows the conventional wisdom in the art. *Standard Oil Co. v. American Cyanamid Co.*, 774 F.2d 448, 474, 227 U.S.P.Q. 293, 298 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

B) Discussion of the rejection of claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gordon (U.S. Patent No. 6,558,264) in view of Blair et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,462,505).

Claims 1-5

Claim 1 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner.

In the Final Office Action of 4/12/06, the Examiner again asserts that “it would have been obvious to provide the apparatus of Gordon with a blower (34), and the valves (102) as taught by Blair et al for the purpose of enhancing the safety for the user.” (Page 3 of Final Office Action). Applicant traverses since the Gordon reference teaches away from such a modification. A reference may be said to teach away when a person of ordinary skill, upon reading the reference, would be discouraged from following the path set out in the reference, or would be led in a direction divergent from the path the applicant took. *In re Gurley*, 27 F.3d 551, 31 USPQ 2d 1130, 1131 (Fed. Cir. 1994)

Here, the Gordon reference discusses an inflatable wedge for use with a water slide. The wedge is used by a child or adult running and jumping onto the wedge and sliding down the wedge onto a water slide. (Abstract). The wedge is described as a plastic, air-tight member, being approximately forty to fifty inches wide, six to nine feet long, and thirty to thirty-six inches high. (Col. 3, lines 19-23). Such an air-tight plastic wedge of about 3 feet high would not work with a continually running blower, as recited in the claim. In the previous response, Applicant clarified the claimed subject matter to recite: “the apparatus of a type such that the apparatus is safely usable as long as the blower is continually running.”

The Examiner now asserts that “There is no structure or standard of what is “safely usable” in the specification of the present application.” (Page 3 of Final Office Action). However, the application clearly sets out the proper standard, such as “if a blower stopped working for any reason, air within an inflatable structure would immediately exit through the blower causing the structure to deflate rapidly.” (Page 2, lines 25-26). Also, in Figures 5 and 6 and the discussion on page 3 lines 1-7, Applicant clearly discusses prior art inflatables and Figure 6 clearly shows a structure that is not safely usable when the airflow is stopped or substantially reduced. Accordingly, Applicant believes claim 1 is clear in reciting an inflatable

that uses a blower for more than just inflation but also for support as long as the blower is running. In contrast, Gordon is not that type of structure. Gordon describes an airtight unit. The Gordon device is inflated and kept inflated by filling chambers with air and closing off a valve trapping the air.

An inflatable that utilizes a continually running blower, such that the apparatus is safely usable as long as the blower is continually running, as claimed, needs continual airflow because it constantly leaks air and requires constant air to maintain the support system. In contrast, the Gordon device is a relatively small, airtight structure, with no need of a continual airflow, and not capable of receiving a continual airflow. Accordingly, the Gordon reference teaches away from being used with a “continually running blower,” as recited claim 1. This is not enhancing the safety for the user, as asserted by the Office Action. Accordingly, there is no motivation or suggestion to modify the Gordon device in such a manner.

The Final Office Action further states that “In response to applicant’s remarks that “because it constantly leaks air and requires constant air to maintain the support system”, it appears that applicant attempts to recite the claimed invention for it does and not what it is. There is no specific structure in the claimed invention to perform such a function.” (Page 4 of Final Office Action). However, Applicant is not trying to recite the claimed invention for what it does. Claim 1 recites “the apparatus of a type such that the apparatus is safely usable as long as the blower is continually running.” Applicant is claiming a specific type of inflatable device. As discussed above and throughout the application, these devices are well known in the art, and because they constantly leak air, they require constant air to maintain the support system.

Furthermore, Applicant notes that if a proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification. *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984); MPEP § 2143.01. As noted above, putting a continually running blower on the Gordon device would make it unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

Claims 2-5 include all the limitations of their parent claim and are therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-10

Applicant believes claim 6 is not obvious in view of the cited references since, even if combined, the combination does not include each limitation recited in the claim. For instance, Applicant cannot find in the combination an apparatus including a first inflatable section including a slide having a height of at least 15 feet, wherein a second inflatable section is adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of airflow to the inflatable unit is interrupted or stopped such that the slide is supported by the second inflatable section.

The Office Action asserts that the height of the slide, as claimed, is a mere design choice and states that “Gordon disclosed that the inflatable wedge may be used by adults (see abstract). Accordingly, it would have been a matter of design choice to manufacture the slide of Gordon with any desired dimension for the purpose of accommodating different types of user as set forth in the abstract.” (Page 3 of Final Office Action).

However, Applicant notes that the recited limitation recites “a slide having a height of at least 15 feet.” Gordon’s slide is described as being used by a child or adult running and jumping onto the wedge and sliding down the wedge onto a water slide. Not even an adult could jump onto a 15 foot water slide. Such a height is not contemplated or suggested by the Gordon reference and would not be within the mind of any designer as a design choice.

Applicant notes that the claimed inflatable slide is not a mere scaling up of the Gordon slide. If the Gordon slide were relatively sized up it simply would not work as intended and would not perform as the inflatable slide of the claimed invention. (See MPEP 2144.04.IV.A.)

Claims 7-10 include each limitation of their parent claim and are therefore also not anticipated by the cited reference. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 11-13

Claim 11 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner and since, even if combined, the combination does not include each limitation recited in the claim.

For instance, Applicant cannot find in the combination: “an inflatable structure having a height of at least 15 feet” and “adapted to be supported by airflow of a continually running blower such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running,” and

means to at least temporarily support the inflatable structure “at substantially its full height” if the airflow from the blower into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure, as recited in claim 11.

The Examiner asserts that “it would have been obvious to provide the apparatus of Gordon with a blower (34), and the valves (102) as taught by Blair et al for the purpose of enhancing the safety for the user.” Applicant traverses. As discussed above, the Gordon device is an air-tight plastic wedge of about 3 feet high and would not work with a continually running blower such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running. The Gordon device is a relatively small, airtight structure, with no need of a continual airflow, and not capable of receiving a continual airflow as it is being used, and accordingly there is no motivation or suggestion in the art to add such subject matter.

Furthermore, Applicant believes that even if combined, the combination would not include means to at least temporarily support the inflatable structure at substantially its full height if the airflow into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure, as recited in claim 11. In contrast, in the Blair reference, the inner sections (90, 92) would, at most, support side chambers (18, 28). (FIG. 4). However, the side columns 14 would fall down if the airflow was stopped.

Claims 12-13 include all the limitations of their parent claim and are therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-16

Claim 14 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner and since, even if combined, the combination does not include each limitation recited in the claim.

As noted above, the Gordon reference teaches away from being used with a continually running blower since the Gordon apparatus is an airtight structure with no need for continual airflow.

Furthermore, Applicant believes that even if combined, the combination would not include an inflatable structure having a first inflatable portion defining a slide having a height of at least 15 feet and a stairway extending to the top of the slide, as recited in claim 14. Again,

Gordon teaches away from such a structure by describing a thirty to thirty-six inch wedge that is for being jumped upon. In no fashion does Gordon give a suggestion to be modified to a height of at least 15 feet. As noted above, the Office Action asserts that the height of the slide is a mere design choice and states that "Gordon disclosed that the inflatable wedge may be used by adults (see abstract). Accordingly, it would have been a matter of design choice to manufacture the slide of Gordon with any desired dimension for the purpose of accommodating different types of user as set forth in the abstract." (Page 3 of Office Action). However, Applicant notes that the recited limitation recites "a slide having a height of at least 15 feet." Gordon is described as being used by a child or adult running and jumping onto the wedge and sliding down the wedge onto a water slide. Not even an adult could jump onto a 15 foot water slide. Such a height is not contemplated or suggested by the Gordon reference and would not be within the mind of any designer as a design choice.

Applicant notes that the claimed inflatable slide is not a mere scaling up of the Gordon slide. If the Gordon slide were relatively sized up it simply would not work as intended and would not perform as the inflatable slide of the claimed invention. (See MPEP 2144.04.IV.A.)

Claims 15-16 include all the limitations of their parent claim and are therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 17-19

Claim 17 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner and since, even if combined, the combination does not include each limitation recited in the claim.

As noted above, the Gordon reference teaches away from being used with continuous airflow from a blower since the Gordon device is an air-tight structure.

Applicant believes that even if combined, the combination would not include an inflatable section positioned and adapted to: a) remain inflated longer than the other inflatable section after airflow from the blower is interrupted, and b) provide support for the other inflatable section so as to support the other inflatable section up to substantially its full height even as the other inflatable section deflates, as recited in claim 17. Again, at most the Blair structure would only support chambers (18, 28) and not the side columns.

Claims 18-19 include all the limitations of their parent claim and are therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-21

Applicant believes claim 20 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner.

As noted above, the Gordon reference teaches away from being used with continuous airflow from a blower since the Gordon device is an air-tight structure.

Furthermore, Applicant believes that even if combined, the combination would not include supporting a first inflatable section of an inflatable amusement or advertising structure up to substantially its full height using a second inflatable section adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of continual airflow to the inflatable structure is interrupted or stopped, as recited in claim 20.

Claim 21 includes all the limitations of its parent claim and is therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 22-23

Claim 22 is not obvious in view of the cited references since there is no suggestion in the art to modify the primary reference as suggested by the Examiner, and even if combined, the combination does not include each limitation recited in the claim. For instance, Applicant cannot find in the combination: "inflating and supporting an inflatable slide structure to a height of at least 15 feet with an airflow from a continually running blower," or "temporarily supporting the inflatable slide structure at substantially a full height of the slide structure if the airflow into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure," as recited in claim 22.

Moreover, as noted above, the Gordon reference teaches away from being used with a continually running blower since the Gordon device is an air-tight structure.

Claim 23 includes all the limitations of its parent claim and is therefore also not obvious in view of the cited references. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

8. SUMMARY

For the reasons argued above, claims 1-23 were not properly rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Gordon in view of Blair et al.

It is respectfully submitted that the art cited does not render the claims obvious and that the claims are patentable over the cited art. Reversal of the rejection and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT FIELD et al.

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being filed using the USPTO's electronic filing system EFS-Web, and is addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this ____ day of November 2006.

Name

Signature

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. An apparatus comprising:
 - a first inflatable section having an interior open to an airflow from a continually running blower which provides support for the first inflatable section, the apparatus of a type such that the apparatus is safely usable as long as the blower is continually running;
 - a second inflatable section attached to a first side of the first inflatable section and having an interior that is substantially separated from the interior of the first inflatable section; and
 - a third inflatable section attached to a second side of the first inflatable section and having an interior that is substantially separated from the interior of the first inflatable section, wherein the second inflatable section and the third inflatable section are configured such that if the airflow into the first inflatable section from the blower is stopped the second inflatable section and the third inflatable section will not deflate as fast as the first inflatable section, wherein the second inflatable section and the third inflatable section provide support to the first inflatable section when the airflow into the first inflatable section from the blower is stopped.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first inflatable section includes a top surface defining a slide.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the second inflatable section supports the first inflatable section at substantially the full height of the first inflatable section when the airflow is stopped.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the airflow into the second section flows through seam-holes between the first and second section.
5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second inflatable section includes a lower surface resting on a ground surface and a side surface attached at least half-way up a side of the first inflatable section.

6. An apparatus comprising a second inflatable section of an inflatable amusement or advertising unit supporting a first inflatable section, the first inflatable section including a slide having a height of at least 15 feet, wherein the second inflatable section is adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of airflow to the inflatable unit is interrupted or stopped such that the slide is supported by the second inflatable section.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first inflatable section is directly coupled to a blower to receive a continual air-flow from the blower.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, including a wall between the first and second inflatable sections, wherein the second inflatable section receives a portion of the airflow through holes at a seam between the first section and the second section.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first inflatable section is a central portion of the inflatable amusement or advertising unit and the second section is on a side of the first inflatable section.

10. The apparatus of claim 6, including a third inflatable section for supporting the first inflatable section, wherein the third inflatable section is adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of airflow to the inflatable unit is interrupted or stopped.

11. An apparatus comprising:

an inflatable structure having a height of at least 15 feet and adapted to be supported by airflow of a continually running blower such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running; and

means to at least temporarily support the inflatable structure at substantially its full height if the airflow from the blower into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the inflatable structure includes an upper surface defining a slide.

13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein means to at least temporarily support includes a second inflatable structure coupled to the inflatable structure that is not open to the airflow.

14. An apparatus comprising:

an inflatable structure having a first inflatable portion defining a slide having a height of at least 15 feet and a stairway extending to the top of the slide, the first inflatable portion having an interior volume open to an air-flow from a blower and adapted to be pressurized by the blower running continually such that the inflatable structure is safely usable as long as the blower is running, the inflatable structure including a second inflatable portion attached to the first inflatable portion and having a bottom surface resting on a ground surface and a top section attached to the first inflatable portion at a height at least half-way up the first inflatable portion, the second inflatable portion not having direct communication with the airflow such that the second inflatable portion inflates slower than the first inflatable portion and also deflates slower than the first inflatable portion, wherein if the airflow from the blower is stopped or reduced the second inflatable portion will at least temporarily support the first inflatable portion.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the second inflatable portion receives a portion of the airflow through holes at a seam between the first inflatable portion and the inflatable portion section.

16. The apparatus of claim 14, including a third inflatable portion attached to the first inflatable portion, the third inflatable portion not having direct communication with the airflow.

17. An apparatus comprising an inflatable amusement or advertising structure adapted for inflation by a substantially continuous airflow from a blower such that the inflatable structure is safely usable only as long as the blower is running, the structure including at least two inflatable sections wherein a first one of the inflatable sections is positioned and adapted to: a) remain

inflated longer than the other inflatable section after airflow from the blower is interrupted, and
b) provide support for the other inflatable section so as to support the other inflatable section up to substantially its full height even as the other inflatable section deflates.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the apparatus includes an inflatable slide.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the structure includes a third inflatable section which is also adapted to: a) remain inflated longer than the other inflatable section after airflow from the blower is interrupted, and b) provide support the other inflatable section even as the other inflatable section deflates.

20. A method comprising supporting a first inflatable section of an inflatable amusement or advertising structure up to substantially its full height using a second inflatable section adapted to deflate more slowly than the first inflatable section when a source of continual airflow to the inflatable structure is interrupted or stopped.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the airflow to the structure is delivered by a continually running blower.

22. A method comprising:

inflating and supporting an inflatable slide structure to a height of at least 15 feet with an airflow from a continually running blower; and

at least temporarily supporting the inflatable slide structure at substantially a full height of the slide structure if the airflow into the inflatable structure is reduced to a level that does not support the inflatable structure.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein at least temporarily supporting includes providing a separate inflatable section of the inflatable structure that does not include a direct opening to the airflow.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.